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SUBJECT: SOUTHERN SUDAN: POLITICAL FACTIONALISM WITHIN THE  
SPLM

REF: KHARTOUM 849

Classified By: CG Juba R. Whitehead, Reason: Section 1.4 (b) and (d)

11. (C) Summary: The Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) has become the dominant single political movement in Southern Sudan, and the potential genesis of a one-party state. The July 2005 death of John Garang and the formation of the Government of South Sudan (GoSS) have given the SPLM opportunities to bring rivals and former adversaries into the fold. The enlargement process has intensified factionalism within the SPLM )- by no means a new phenomenon -- as the former inner circle of John Garang competes with a bloc coalescing around GoSS President and SPLM Chairman Salva Kiir, and a smaller faction headed by Riek Machar. GoSS President and SPLM Chairman Salva Kiir,s commitment to consensus has kept the situation in check, although internal tensions remain. Presidential Advisor Malwal reportedly leads a sub-faction within Kiir,s group that was a major factor in the agitations between Kiir and Garang faction. Malwal,s influence over Kiir now seems to be on the decline, to the satisfaction of the Garangists. The following paragraphs chart alliances and internal dynamics. End summary.

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SPLM Rampant  
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12. (U) During two decades of civil war, the SPLM experienced a series of internal splits generated by traditional ethnic rivalries, differences over secession, and the autocratic leadership style of John Garang. The Government in Khartoum took full advantage of this process to use factions that hived off from the SPLM as Khartoum,s proxies in the war. Despite its fissiparous tendencies, the SPLM remained the dominant political and military movement in the South. As the Naivasha peace process gained traction, various factions began to return to the fold, beginning with the Equatoria Defense Force in 2004.

13. (SBU) The signature of the CPA in January 2005 accelerated this process. The historical political parties of the South ) atrophied, with largely geriatric leadership ) provided no serious counterweight. Other forces such as the South Sudan Defense Force (SSDF) remained in the field but were more military than political in nature, although the personal animus of some militia leaders toward John Garang

posed a daunting challenge to southern unity, and thus implementation of the CPA. Garang,s death offered opportunities for compromise that had not been possible before. Since Salva Kiir cut a deal with the most powerful leader of the SSDF, Paolino Matiep, many of the followers of other factions, such as that of Gordon Kong, have reportedly defected to the SPLM.

14. (C) The formation of the GoSS further strengthened the position of the SPLM, which is largely synonymous with the GoSS. With jobs, patronage, and ) most importantly ) a large infusion of resources at its disposal, the SPLM has consolidated its position as the de facto single dominant party of the South. GoSS ministers from the National Congress (NCP) and other smaller parties have cooperated with their putative SPLM partners; in fact, a number of NCP supporters have defected to the SPLM. USAP, the only other political grouping that can claim even limited support throughout the South, has also fallen into line. Perhaps out of fear of renewed conflict, perhaps due to collective mistrust of the North, the South is more politically unified, and the SPLM more powerful, than it has been in fifteen years.

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#### In Place of Inter-Party Politics, Factionalism

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15. (C) While the SPLM has no serious political rival in the South, there are internal strains. Three major factions exist on the basis of ethnicity/regionalism and allegiance to the memory and the vision of the late John Garang. The first faction counts those who were closest to Garang and who continue to support to varying degree his vision of a unitary Sudan and the SPLM as a national party. This faction

includes Garang relatives, the most senior officers in the SPLA, and prominent SPLM Ministers in the Government of National Unity. Ethnically, this group draws support from Garang,s Dinka Bor clan and most other Dinka groups along the Nile, and the majority of the Shilluk. It also has the allegiance of the small southern tribes along the eastern portion of the border with Kenya and Uganda, although these groups have traditionally vied for greater political power for Equatoria and supported Equatorian politicians within SPLM.

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#### Garang Faction: Support for Unity Only if CPA Implemented

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16. (C) The Garang faction enjoys the broadest base of any SPLM faction, but it is also the only faction that still pays lip service to Garang,s vision of a unified Sudan, a concept that is unpopular with a majority of Southerners. As the NCP is increasingly blamed by the GoSS for the laggardly pace of CPA implementation, the Garang faction appears to shifting its stance to support unity only if CPA implementation proceeds. No clear-cut leader has yet emerged within the faction to replace John Garang; his widow Rebecca, SPLM Secretary General Pagan Amum, and GoSS Minister of Regional

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Cooperation Nhial Deng Nhial appear the most likely candidates. A brief sketch of major members of the Garang faction follows.

-- Rebecca Garang: A Dinka Bor, Rebecca reportedly influenced her late husband,s decisions on whom to advance, or impede, within the SPLM. Opinions are split over her qualifications or ability to seek or manage SPLM leadership. Her stewardship of SPLM finances during the war is frequently raised. She favors a secular, unified Sudan.

-- Pagan Amum Okich: A Shilluk from near Malakal with royal antecedents, he recently replaced Riek Machar as number two in the SPLM hierarchy. The charismatic Amun was one of Garang,s most trusted insiders. He is close to both Rebecca and Nhial Deng. He espouses unity, but not with the vigor of

Garang. Noted SPLM lawyer Ghazi Suleiman recently commented to an embassy official that Amum would be a great leader, except he is &too short and too Shilluk.8

-- Nhial Deng Nhial: A Dinka from Tonj, Bahr el Ghazel, Nhial was a chief negotiator of the CPA. He is highly respected with the SPLM and viewed by many as the de facto leader of the Garang faction, although he has done little to reach out in the public. He supports the unity of Sudan, but only if the North respects full implementation of the CPA.

-- Paul Mayom Akec: The GoSS Presidential Advisor for Legal Affairs, he a Dinka from Rumbek.

-- Edward Lino Abyei: An Ngok Dinka from Abyei, Lino was the long-time head of SPLA external security and intelligence, and as such was feared and disliked by many. He was close to Garang, but has reportedly shifted toward Kiir, possibly in hope of being named Governor of Abyei. Separatists accuse him of being pro-North.

-- Gen. Kual Manyang Juuk: A Dinka Bor from Bor town related to John Garang, he is GoNU Minister of Transport, Roads and Bridges. He once espoused unity, but has reportedly sought closer ties with Kiir.

-- Elijah Malok: A Dinka Bor and the uncle of John Garang, Malok is Deputy Governor of the Central Bank and Governor of the Bank of Southern Sudan. His appointment to that position by Garang caused great consternation in the SPLM; many are surprised that he remains in place

-- Gen. Oyai Deng Ajak: A Shilluk from Upper Nile, he is currently Chief of Staff (COS) of the SPLA. He is married to Garang,s daughter. Deng frustrated Kiir,s attempt to move him from the COS slot to Minister of SPLA Affairs.

-- Maj. Gen. Salva Matok Deng: He is SPLA A/COS for Administration. He is a Dinka from Bahr el Ghazel who does not support Kiir.

-- Maj. Gen. Bior Ajang: A Dinka Bor from Upper Nile, he is SPLA A/COS for Operations. Ajang was related to Garang; some claim he was Garang,s son by the widow of Garang,s deceased brother.

-- Maj. Gen. Oath Mai: The SPLA A/COS for Administration, he was one of the few influential Nuer supporters of Garang.

-- Maj. Gen. Beng Deng Kuol: A Dinka Ngok from Abyei, he is a Southern member of the Joint Defense Board (JDB).

-- Maj. Gen. Augustino Jadallah: Of mixed race from Equatoria State, he is a member of the JDB. An erstwhile Garang supporter, Jadallah has reportedly adopted a more neutral stance of late.

-- Maj. Gen. Ahmad al Umdah: A Nubian from Nuba Mountains, he is a member of the JDB and was close to John Garang.

-- Deng Alor Kuol: The Minister of Cabinet Affairs in the GoNU, Kuol is a Dinka from Abyei. He participated in the Abyei Boundaries Commission and has held a number of senior SPLM jobs. He reportedly favors secession, but only if Abyei is attached to the South.

-- Yassir Sa,id Arman: The former spokesman of the SPLM is from Gezira, in North Sudan, one of the relatively few &Arabs8 in the SPLM. Formerly a member of Garang,s inner circle, he favors unity and the concept of the New Sudan.

-- Malik Aggar Ayar: From the small Ingasana tribe of Southern Blue Nile, he is currently Minister of Investment in the GoNU. Aggar was critical of Kiir,s initial perceived concessions to the North, but has reportedly moved closer to Kiir. He is said to favor unity because he knows that with separation, Southern Blue Nile would end up in the North.

-- Michael Makwei: A Dinka Bor, Makwei is Minister of Legal Affairs. He is close to both Nhial Deng and Pagan Amum but has reportedly moved away from Rebecca and toward Kiir. Recent comments indicate that he is increasingly leaning toward separation due to the North,s stalling tactics on the CPA.

-- Other members of the Garang faction are GoSS Information Minister Samson Kwaje (Fajalla) and Public Service Minister David Deng Athorbei (Dinka from Yirol). Speaker of the Southern Sudan Legislative Assembly James Wani Igga, a Bari, has distanced himself from the Garang faction and toward Kiir, partly because of his ambitions in Equatoria, and partly because of his preference for secession.

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Kiir Faction: Broad SPLA, Ethnic Support; Favors Secession  
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¶7. (C) The second major SPLM faction consists of those who support Salva Kiir and were put off by the autocratic style of Garang. Most remained within the SPLM throughout the struggle despite their differences with Garang, but a few, including Matiep, actively fought against the SPLM. Kiir,s past rivalry with Garang, which came to a head at a December 2004 meeting in Rumbek, has allowed Kiir to court former Garang foes such as Matiep, bring them into the SPLM, and in the process strengthen his own following.

¶8. (C) The Kiir faction enjoys support among the Dinka in the northwest, especially the Rek and Malual, and from Bahr el Ghazel. Kiir also draws support from the Fertit and Zande -- the latter because of conflicts with displaced Dinka Bor in Zande lands in Western Equatoria State ) and, increasingly, the Nuer from Upper Nile. The SPLA rank and file as well as many junior and mid-level officers support Kiir, who is perceived more as soldier than politician. In the 2004 confrontation in Rumbek, fifty SPLA commanders reportedly sided with Kiir, and four with Garang.

¶9. (C) As First Vice President of the GoNU, President of the GoSS and titular head of both the SPLA and the SPLM; Kiir is indisputably the most powerful person in Southern Sudan today. Kiir,s position on Southern secession -- which he privately favors ) is popular with most southerners. He is

also the least divisive SPLM leader in ethnic terms: he satisfies the ambitions of the plurality Dinka groups that form the core of the SPLM without raising the specter of Dinka Bor hegemony that troubled other ethnic groups during Garang,s tenure. Most observers think that the Garang faction will nonetheless challenge Kiir,s control of the SPLM, although not necessarily his leadership of the GoSS. Members of Garang,s faction have told Embassy officials that they have no problem following Kiir, but they were worried about the influence exercised by Presidential Advisor Bona Malwal. Malwal,s influence is reportedly waning as Kiir accedes to the demands of the Garangists.

¶10. (C) Kiir is well respected in the South, but he does not have the large coterie of powerful followers in the political class or the popular adulation formerly accorded to Garang. The following individuals number among Kiir,s chief supporters.

-- Remy Oller Itorong: A Latuka born in Torit in 1944, he is Deputy Speaker of the Council of States. He lived in Khartoum for many years and has limited influence in the South. He leans toward secession.

-- Dr. Justin Yac: A Dinka from Bar el Ghazel, as GoSS Minister of Cabinet Affairs, Yac is arguably the most influential force in day-to-day governance. Yac was SPLM Minister of Health and the one-time head of the SRRC until a falling out with Garang, reportedly over accusations of corruption. He is close to Kiir, but anathema to the Garang faction. He is said to favor separation.

-- Bona Malwal: The Minister of Information and Culture under President Nimeiri in the 1970s, Malwal is Dinka Twic. A controversial figure in the South due to his Northern connections, he is now a Presidential Advisor to President Bashir. The influence Malwal exercises over Kiir, a source of great concern for the Garang faction, seems to be lessening, and Malwal recently denigrated Kiir,s leadership in front of a U.S. diplomat. Malwal reportedly favors unity.

-- Albino Akol Akol: A Gogrial Dinka from Bahr el Ghazel, he was a professional army officer in the SAF and was affiliated with SANU and the Southern Front. As the GoSS Minister of Industry, Mining and Industry, he is involved in the all-important petroleum portfolio. Akol leans toward secession if CPA implementation is not respected.

-- Anthony Lino Mukana: A Zande from Yambio, Makana is GoSS Minister of Commerce, Trade and Supply. A former SPLA commander, he leans toward secession.

-- Maj. Gen. Obutu Mamur Mette: A Latuka from Torit, he is the A/COS of Political Orientation and a member of the JDB. Mamur is the highest-ranking long-time SPLA officer supportive of Kiir, but he reportedly refused to support a rumored Kiir plot to mutiny against Garang. He seems to favor separation.

-- Maj. Gen. Paul Malong Awan: A Dinka from Bahr el Ghazel, he was COS of the SPLA 3rd Front in Upper Nile. A Garang dissident and strong supporter of Kiir, he now ensures the personal security of the GoSS President.

-- Gen. Thomas Cirilo: A Bari from Equatoria, he commands SPLA forces committed to the JIU.

-- Aleu Ageing Aleu: A Dinka from Bahr el Ghazel, he joined the SPLA in the 1980s and is now State Minister of the Interior in the GoNU. His views on secession/unity are not known.

-- Paolino Matiep: A Nuer, he was bitterly opposed to John Garang. Kiir surprised the North by convincing Matiep to rejoin the SPLM and bring with him the majority of SSDF fighters under the terms of the Juba Declaration of early 2006. With Matiep moved to the newly created number two position in the SPLA chain of command, Kiir has strengthened his base with the Nuer of Upper Nile, to the detriment of Riek Machar.

-- Mary Kiden Wani: A Kuku from Equatoria known for her objectivity, the Minister of Gender and Social Welfare has gravitated toward Kiir.

-- Samuel Abu John: A Zande from Western Equatoria, Abu John is Kiir,s Presidential Advisor for security. Frank and pragmatic, he supports Kiir and favors separation.

-- Other reported Kiir supporters are James Kok (Dinka from Aweil), GoSS Telecommunications Minister Fier Cuang Malong (Dinka from Aweil), GoSS Presidential Political Advisor Lual Ding Woll (Dinka Tonj), and Advisor on Gender and Human Rights Awut Deng Achuil (Dinka Tonj), one of the most influential women in the SPLM. Minister of Finance and Economic Development GoSS Arthur Kuein Chol (Dinka Aweil) supported Kiir in the 2004 confrontation with Garang.

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Machar Faction: Nuer Chameleon as Southern Wild Card  
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11. (C) The third SPLM faction is headed by GoSS Vice President Riek Machar, a much traveled veteran of southern politics who has cycled in and out of the SPLM. A Nuer from Western Upper Nile, Machar was founder or co-founder of Southern Sudan Democratic Forum, Coordinating Council of South Sudan, and United Democratic Sudanese Forces.

Machar,s ambition to lead Southern Sudan is not a secret to anyone, but his frequent switch of allegiances during the war and his signature of the Khartoum Peace Agreement with the National Islamic Front in 1997 alienated many Southerners.

¶12. (C) Matiep,s alliance with Kiir has reduced Machar,s influence among Machar,s traditional Nuer constituency. Machar has recently sought to bolster his profile by pursuing a series of reconciliation initiatives and by traveling to Nuer areas in the company of Matiep. Pagan Amum,s ascension to Secretary General of the SPLM has somewhat reduced Machar,s influence there. Machar normally pursues his own self-interest by seeking alliances of convenience. He initially worked closely with Kiir, but is believed to be gravitating more toward Rebecca Garang in recent months. Once a proponent of separation, Machar has recently gone mute on this issue. The following politicians support him:

-- Theophilus Ochang Lotti: A Lokuya from Eastern Equatoria, Lotti studied medicine in Italy. He was the founder of the Equatoria Defense Force, an anti-SPLM group, in 1997 and was a co-signatory of the Khartoum Peace Agreement. He was once a separatist.

-- John Luk Jok: A Nuer from Upper Nile, Jok is Minister of Culture, Youth and Sport, an MP, and a southern member of the National Petroleum Commission (NPC). He was the SPLA Representative in London in 1985, but in 1994 threw his lot with the South Sudan Liberation Movement.

-- Joseph Malwal: A Dinka from Bahr el Ghazal, Malwal is now GoNU Minister of Tourism and Wildlife Resources. He was a founder of the Salvation Democratic Front and later joined the South Sudan Democratic Front. He is reportedly inclined to side with whoever happens to be on top.

-- Angelina Teny: A Nuer and the wife of Machar, Teny is GoNU State Minister of Energy and a NPC member. She is one of the most influential women in the SPLM.

-- Lam Akol: A Shilluk, Akol is GoNU Foreign Minister, the SPLM,s most significant national ministry. Perceived in the South as a sell-out to the North, Akol seems largely motivated by his own interests rather than any past ties to Machar. Akol has limited influence in the SPLM.

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A Strategy of Consensus  
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¶13. (C) In contrast to Garang, Kiir cultivates a leadership style of consensus and compromise. While Kiir does not have the stature or popular mandate of Garang in the South, he has not been a polarizing force. Kiir,s expansion of the Politburo and elevation of Pagan Amum to the number two slot

is a good example of his conciliatory style. Kiir,s willingness to reach out to rivals has helped calm internal turmoil within the SPLM, although tension remains as the Garang faction seeks to regain the status that it collectively and individually enjoyed under the leadership of Garang. Kiir initially maintained good relations with Machar, but there are indications that Machar has pulled back and is seeking to work more closely with Rebecca Garang to prevent Kiir from solidifying his grip on power. A SPLM Minister privately remarked that Kiir, who is frequently outside of the South, has been increasingly unable to control Machar.

¶14. (C) John Garang,s dominating and autocratic style may have allowed him to succeed as both the First Vice President in the GoNU and the President of the GoSS. The two positions, however, are not a good fit for Kiir,s inclusive, consultative style. When he is in Juba serving as the GoSS President, he is largely unable to influence actions in the GoNU, and when he is in Khartoum, the factions of the SPLM, most notably Machar, use the opportunity to solidify and increase their power.



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Internal Dynamics and Looking Ahead  
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¶15. (C) While verbal sniping takes place between factions behind closed doors, most observers of the southern scene do not expect imminent seismic upheaval within the SPLM. The three main factions have circled the wagons out of necessity due to the belief that the common adversary remains in the North, and the understanding that delivering the peace dividend to the population must be the SPLM's top priority if it is to maintain its popular appeal. For now, at least, politics have taken a back seat to governance.

¶16. (C) A traditional military coup against Kiir seems unlikely, although the old maxim of &never say never<sup>8</sup> applies. A few supporters of the Garang faction in the senior ranks of the SPLA reportedly still harbor animosity over Kiir's 2004 challenge to Garang, but there is no indication of serious plans to use force to topple Kiir. A far more likely scenario for instability would be a spontaneous military mutiny at some SPLA garrison sparked by GoSS/SPLM failure to pay salaries, to improve training and physical conditions in which soldiers live, and to maintain discipline in the ranks.

¶17. (C) Machar is expected to contest SPLM leadership with Kiir at the next SPLM congress, but senior members of the Garang faction may be prepared to bide their time and challenge Kiir's control of SPLM mechanisms rather than his leadership. Upcoming events will help gauge where the fault lines run, and how far various factions are willing to push. The SPLM Politburo meeting in early April featured Pagan Amum acting for the first time as second in rank to Kiir in his role as SPLM Secretary General (SG). As the SG, Amum is responsible for convening the SPLM party congress by the end of the year, potentially as early as May but more likely later. During the recent meeting (reftel), factional in-fighting seemed to be kept to a minimum. While the Garang faction will continue to strive for increased control of the levers of power, smart money has it that Kiir will remain the party's chosen leader, and not just the custodial heir of John Garang.  
STEINFELD